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Ordinary Workers and Industrial Relations in a New World Order

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Abstract

Taking its point of departure from a NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) conference held in Copenhagen in 1953, this paper¹ begins by tracing the foundation of the powerful political role that labor organizations held during a significant part of the twentieth century. At the conference, “labor” was emphasized as occupying a “key role” in the struggle of Western societies to withstand the challenge of communism—military alone could not achieve this objective. Since around 1990, this has fundamentally changed and the paper explores the contemporary situation through an ethnographic study—involving fieldwork at both workplaces and private homes—of Polish migrant laborers participating in the Danish labor market. Firstly, it is shown how the Polish laborers, due to the lower costs they represent, benefit from the new opportunities. Secondly, the paper illustrates how the trade union, though uneasy with the downward pressure on wage and working conditions that the Polish represent, prioritizes the organization of workers in order to maintain some degree of control over the labor market. Finally, the question is raised how the EU (European Union) is able to navigate two contrasting concerns: the urge both to create more cross-border competition and to uphold an image of a “social Europe” which might be key to maintain cohesion and legitimacy.

Keywords

Cold war, neo-liberalism, work life, industrial relations, EU (European Union) enlargement

To begin with, a quote: “The role of labor in world affairs has become a key factor”.

From when and where does this phrase originate?

Is it embedded in the contemporary regime of globalization, referring to the internationalization of economy in which companies cross borders in order to seek cheap labor around the globe?

Or does the quotation represent the international labor movement of the late nineteenth century, which after a tough beginning was getting a stronger foothold among the masses and developing into a movement for the people?

Or is it perhaps from a few decades later in the wake of World War One when threats of riddle and revolt were unfolding across the European continent?

Actually, this quote is from a different context altogether. The first word in the line gives a hint to the origin. “Labor”, spelled in the American way, indicates that the quotation springs from a US context and from a period in which the US had positioned itself as the principal power in the West. With its few apposite words, the whole phrase encapsulates what might be termed as a world order of a particular period.

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The year is 1953, the venue is Copenhagen, Denmark's capital, and the scene is a conference within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The member states of the organization are represented at the conference: Canada, France, Great Britain, Belgium, Luxembourg, Italy, Greece, Portugal, Turkey, Iceland, Norway, and Denmark—along with the United States, the undisputed hegemon of the alliance. This case is used as a point of departure, since it so unambiguously contrasts the contemporary state of affairs in the labor market.

The conference aimed to “create the largest possible mutual understanding and solidarity among the peoples of the NATO countries”, and it had the objective of making,

NATO an efficient manifestation of the unity of the member states in not only military but also, and equally importantly, in non-military matters which touch upon political, economic and social problems within the countries. In the long run, a military defense in itself is not sufficient to guard the grounding of the Western democracy².

These manifestations resembled the general American understanding of the challenges in the postwar years, as expressed in another context in the same year, namely in the so-called “Labor Program of the Mutual Security Agency”. “We fight Russian communism on three fronts: The military, the economic, and the ideological. The working class is key to the two latter. If we lose there, we will not prevail at the military front” (Boel 1999)³.

What is interesting in the context of this paper is the central role that “labor” was given in the world order of the Cold War period: “(Labor’s) relationship to ideological conflicts, to state power, and to world organizations has become decisive”. The reason for this was the characteristic of the main counterpart in the Cold War, the Soviet Union, which stood “as a symbol or incarnation of an idea which has taken root amongst great masses of people over the last hundred years”.

Moreover, the threat was particularly in relation to workers’ organizations and mass movements (predominantly the peace movement) “where the Soviet attack is mostly concentrated and where the outcome will be decisive”. The main problem was that the social conditions for ordinary people in the years following the war were very poor, in contrast to their expectations: “A wide gap had developed between the hopes of the ‘little people’ as nurtured under the occupation and the reality of post-war Europe”. This made them vulnerable to anti-capitalist rhetoric of the kind sent from the East.

The way out of this dilemma was to include workers in political decisions and to listen to their needs; in other words, to provide them with power: “(We must give) more effective attention to the problems of workers’ standards of living such as purchasing power, employment, housing needs, manpower, migration, etc.”.

The analysis summarizes how the awareness of workers’ needs and improvement of their conditions were a necessary part of efforts to maintain the Cold War power balance:

If the foregoing proposals are adopted, we shall be in a stronger position to counteract the maneuvers of totalitarianism. Not by special tricks or by sheer anti-Communist propaganda but by real substantial acts which transform NATO—the Atlantic Community—into a living instrument of democratic policy and action... (then will) we be able to make a real contribution to the defence and expansion of the principles and philosophies of the free world. (see note No. 2)

This is what put “labor” in a role as a “key factor”. And this is what consequently provided labor organizations and political parties with the potential to influence at a scope that seems highly surprising today. This strategy paralleled in economic terms the priority that Keynesianism—the preferred economic tool of the period—put on maintaining a high level of employment (with the social unrest of the 1930s as the contrasting scenario) as well as general attention to workers’ demands.

TRANSFORMATION PERIOD—FROM KEYNESIANISM IN THE OLD WORLD ORDER TO NEO-LIBERALISM

The author will argue—knowing that variations are numerous and there are important dissimilarities in patterns of industrial relations both within the Nordic countries and within Western European countries in general—that these trends laid the groundwork for events in the European labor markets until the 1980s. In the post-war years, an overall attention to the basic conditions of the “working class” was a general concern. Even during the 1970s and the 1980s, claims of “workers’ resistance” and the rise of “the working class” were part of the struggle for improving working conditions and gaining political influence. This state of affairs is only understood if it is seen how closely related it was to the existence of an Eastern Bloc that held the role as the main counterpart to the West. This is true despite the fact that the prospective of workers adhering to socialism or communism was only an aspiration for a limited group of left-wing intellectuals and not mirrored in the general atmosphere among ordinary laborers, “the working class” (Jul Nielsen 2004). Still, threats of conflict and mobilization were effective means to improve working conditions.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc, this order vanished. Since 1990, neo-liberalism has swept through the Western world, freed from the ideological and political restraints of the old world order that contained it since its (re-)launching in the early 1970s (already in 1974, neo-liberalist von Hayek received the Nobel Prize for Economics).

Only briefly some of the characteristics of this transition should be pointed out; overall they will be familiar to sociological scholars (Coffey and Thornley 2009; Crouch 2013; Sennett 2006; Wimmer and Schiller 2002). Among the most important is The Maastricht Treaty 1994 with the so-called four freedoms (labor, capital, commodities, and service). In

the context of this paper, the right to free movement of labor obviously is of utter significance. With the enlargement of the EU (European Union) in 2004 with 10 new countries, eight of these previously parts of the former Eastern Bloc, a huge labor market with considerably lower levels of wages and living costs—should merge with the original one within this open border regime. Also relevant in this overall putting aside (what became now regarded) antiquated policies is the establishment of the WTO (World Trade Organization) in 1995, which among other liberal concerns has been fighting protectionist politics (and thus also made national workers more exposed to competition) (Pedersen 2013). These transformations have had an immense negative impact on influence for “workers”, by the way, a notion which now, characteristically, is not often used (unless referring specifically to pure functionality) because it appears archaic or perhaps non-operational. Notions such as “workers”, “working class”, etc., seem to belong to an old world, and they simply do not represent a potential societal threat anymore. The world order has changed⁴.

ORDINARY WORKERS AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS IN A NEW WORLD ORDER

In the last part of this paper, will be presented some results from ongoing fieldwork that explores how the conditions for wage earners are impacted by these overall transformations, how they affect the everyday relationships in workplaces, and the significant impact they have on the ways that a feasible family life can be arranged. What is involved in this transformation is also the challenges for labor organizations and industrial relations more generally. A state of affairs with open borders and an increase in cross-border work migration exposes unions and other organizations to not only harsh bargaining conditions but eventually also to a loss of legitimacy as the bargaining entity. As Crouch puts it “... neoliberals

are unequivocally hostile to trade unions, which seek to interfere with the smooth operation of the labour market” (Crouch 2013). And no wonder seen from within the neo-liberal paradigm: What constitutes unions is their ability to extinguish (part of) the competition between workers by monopolizing (portions of) work functions for specific groups of workers (Galenson 1952; Jul Nielsen 2002). One outcome of this is the hostility toward unions as such; another is the claim that yellow unions should have the right to compete with the traditional red unions.

In scholarly debates, the conflicts that arise from these challenges are mostly identified at the institutional and formal level, where a conflict evolves into a principal struggle, the outcome of which is vital to the prospective relations in the labor market. An example is the nationally renowned Danish case from Vejlegården, in which a restaurant owner in 2012 made an agreement with a yellow trade union. The conflict led to severe hostility and threats among the involved parts and it came to play a significant political role since it was brought up rhetorically by the political wings that used it for promoting their respective standpoints. This was followed by a blockade by the unions under the umbrella of the Danish National Federation of Trade Unions (the LO), which beforehand had managed the agreements. More broadly known—and at the EU level—is the Laval and Bolkestein cases, where the core of the struggle was how to interpret the demands toward foreign workers and service providers within the established national agreement system (Blanpain, Świątkowski, and Aliprantis 2009; Blanpain 2006).

These cases are important since they mark an era unlike the previous one, in which labor organizations in most Northern European countries either had the power to keep out foreign workers and service providers or the capability to make demands when they became accepted inside. Such cases moreover establish the rules for the subsequent development both regarding conditions in workplaces and in

relation to the roles played by social partners.

However, equally paramount to understanding conditions for ordinary workers is knowledge of the way in which the current—and probably future—issues are handled at a local and day-to-day level where people are working to obtain a reasonable wage under fair conditions in a way that provides them with some security for the remaining years of their lives⁵.

In order to get insight into that part of present-day circumstances, the author during the last three years has been preoccupied with research mainly directed at understanding the impact (for the workers involved and for the organizational and regulative system) of severely increased labor migration; this being the significant novel feature of the labor market⁶.

This research has involved interviews with key people such as union personnel both in and outside Denmark as well as EU parliament politicians; though first and foremost it has taken place among Polish migrant workers employed on Danish construction sites. In particular, one Polish man and his shifting working teams on two sites have been followed. Two of the Polish workers have also been visited in their homes in Denmark and Poland, respectively.

Here the investigation will not be outlined in detail⁷ but only the most significant findings presented.

To begin with, it should be underlined that this research does not focus on the significant increase in irregular work that has also marked the previous decade—being also a new feature in the traditionally very well ordered Nordic labor markets. The period has seen a rise of the number of workers without contracts, with heavy underpayment, with decline in trade union membership, with workers of subcontractors finding themselves in a purely regulated grey zone, etc. (Arnholz and Wesley Hansen 2009; Lubanski 1999). However, just as important, that it is to explore this development is it to understand what actually takes place when there is an

effort to create regular and orderly terms. And interestingly, it is indicated here that even in that situation, circumstances are fundamentally altered compared with the situation a generation ago.

The research illustrates how the Polish laborers, due to the lower costs they represent, benefit from the new opportunities by working—in the cases investigated—within the union system, i.e., in accordance with the agreements achieved through collective bargaining. Moreover, it is elucidated how the trade union, although uneasy with the downward pressure on wages and working conditions that the Polish represent, make it a priority to organize and represent the workers in order to maintain some degree of control over the labor market. Further, it is argued that the workers' families must be made part of the analysis if the migratory praxis is to be sufficiently understood. In conclusion, the question is briefly raised whether the cases in this paper can be a model for the task that EU and national governments face of how to respond to the challenge of cross-border migration, which reduces labor costs through more competition but also may lead to social destabilization.

A Paradox: Working on Danish Terms—Below Danish Wages

Much of the attention on workers from the former Eastern Bloc concerns their pressure on wages and working conditions when they work under unorganized terms, largely employed by subcontractors that—in spite of rules and regulations—may not maintain orderly conditions within the formalized labor market system. Stories about laborers stewed under horrific conditions in personnel containers or alongside the walls in worn out buildings hit the news headlines from time to time. However, as mentioned above, these are not the ones under scrutiny here. The Polish teams that have been followed have in every case worked under “orderly” terms. They are members of the union and they work in line with the conditions settled through collective

bargaining and local agreements made by their employer and the local department of the union.

In other words, they are here “on Danish terms”, a creed again and again articulated by the organizations—whether workers' or employers'—as the basic condition for the acceptance and success of foreign workers in Denmark. In the cases here, they are contracted to work on construction sites by an employer who builds for the municipality. This latter also means that it is beyond question that the work must be done in accordance with labor agreements.

Two features, however, attract attention. First, the 8-10 Poles are not mixed with the Danes, who are present in large numbers at the site. Second, the Poles receive less payment than the Danes.

The two features are connected. Through defining specific tasks to be undertaken by the Poles, the employer can benefit from the current situation with a supply of workers more than willing to work for wages below what is typical in Denmark. The union is content with the fact that the Poles earn the negotiated minimum wage (approximately 17€ per hour) and that they are not allowed—as their prime work function—to carry out skilled work (which eventually would lead to a replacement of skilled craftsmen). Still, the outcome of this is unavoidably that these tasks are completed for less money than before the Poles entered the workplace. At one of the construction sites, the alteration is pushed even further. Here, most of the foundation and woodwork on facades and terraces is done by the Polish team. This saves the employer the costs of repeatedly contracting and installing different specialist crews of (Danish) craftsmen. According to the employer at the workplace, this reduces costs even more than the savings per hour. Important to bear in mind here is the fact that wage is not necessarily comparable, since at least according to the employers—the Poles often require more management.

Why does the trade union stand behind this system? Although the century-long history of labor

organization is heavily marked by internal dividing lines among different groups of workers—related to the principle of monopolization (Galenson 1952; Jul Nielsen 2002)—previously, it would not be appropriate to accept national dividing lines and skilled work done by unskilled workers. The apparent justification for the union's involvement in the arrangement presented above is that it is the better alternative when faced with two other evils—either trying to keep out Polish workers or treating them exactly like Danes. While the first option is obviously not relevant since it would be illegal within the open border regime, the problems with the latter deserve some explanation. If the Polish laborer were to receive the same wage as the Danes in the exact same terms, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to attract the Poles as union members since they would face huge barriers to getting employment. As one of the employers stated: “If they are on level (in terms of wage) with the Danes, then we will just chose Danes instead”. In other words, the Polish workers would risk being out-competed on several parameters, such as language and familiarity with customs, skill demands, and working organization. For the union, then, its way of manoeuvring is a means to maintain (some) control and, moreover, to actually connect the newcomers to the union system, which overall is necessary to retain its legitimacy as the bargaining entity in the labor market. And, very importantly, the exchange from Danish to Polish laborers is by no means clear-cut. As indicated, it is nowhere formally articulated that specific work is targeted to Poles, instead particular work tasks are specified as the ones leading to a lower payment and these are the ones undertaken by the Polish laborers. However, as revealed, in practice this marks a descending tendency where particular work tasks previously carried out as skilled work becomes unskilled work with a lower payment. As shown in previous studies (Adersen and Jul Nielsen 2005; Jul Nielsen 2002), definitions of skill in principle are rather a matter of bargaining

power than of the content of the tasks carried out. In relation hereto, it is important to take into consideration the particular work organization and the labor processes carried out in different fields of production. Construction belongs to the branches with very complex processes which are not easy to manage and plan in detail. This leaves room for a lot of detailed regulations difficult to standardize, making it possible in the local negotiations between union and employer—to set up a pattern of specific tasks targeted to different groups without talking in terms of a nationally segregated labor market. In contrast, research into for instance scaffold mounting—which also has a tradition of strong trade unions, shows how the high transparency in this branch where procedures are simple and moreover take place in public have maintained a practice where the Poles involved work in exact same terms as the Danes (Jørring and Køhn 2014).

Then what about the Polish workers? How do they perceive the lower payment? In general, they are very satisfied with the orderly conditions they receive as union members. Not only the wage and other working conditions—such as working clothes, access to the personnel container and heating are regarded as important, but also the status they hold as recognized union members. Some of them compare their current terms of employment with those in Germany, which they were exposed to when working as illegal immigrants in the 1990s—before the EU enlargement (but after the opening up of Poland). One of them expresses it in this way: “In Germany, we were only the tools. For using, eating and throw out! ... (in Denmark) we are the humans, not the tools”.

The lower payment is thus not regarded as a problem for two reasons. First, it by far exceeds the level in their homeland; second, it makes them an attractive workforce, which was also revealed in the above quoted statement from the employer.

Thus, what by first hand seems to be strange contradictions—such as unions standing behind

agreements where workers are treated differently—can be explained as an operable answer to the contemporary conditions. However, to essentially understand the scope of this pattern, it is relevant briefly to refer to what here has been termed the old world order as it was laid out from the 1930s onwards. Immigrating workers in this period were a feature of exception and an outcome of special agreements, most notably in the 1960s where shortages of workers in many Northern European countries meant that labor organizations had to accept an influx of people from (foremost some) Southern European countries. Due to their strong societal position, however, the labor organizations in this period were able to set the fundamental terms, such as only accepting a limited quota of foreign laborers, which moreover had to work in the exact same terms as the national labor force. Today, the political and ideological context around the challenge of laborers competing across different national lines is basically altered in disfavour of the labor side. This is important to bear in mind when superficial observers accuse workers and the general public sentiment for being individualistic and egoistic and using that as the explanation for the lack of union strength. The case rather is that the unions' ability to provide for good labor conditions is much weaker and for reasons far beyond the ideology of individuals.

Returning to the Polish laborers in this paper, one final finding should be mentioned. In the line of arguments that point to the meaningfulness of what at first hand might seem unattractive (poorer conditions than their Danish colleagues), it is important to highlight the question of the migrating workers' families—also an important dimension in the open border system. Employment opportunities abroad as the ones present above can be worthwhile for Polish workers who have their families in the home country where costs are low. Their spouses, often in cooperation with grandparents, can take care of the children and eventually perhaps also provide some

income—thus maintaining a relatively stable home base. However, the situation can be troublesome for foreign workers who try to support a family in Denmark. Here costs are high and the opportunities for a partner to bolster the home economy are fewer. Often there are no accommodating relatives nearby, it is difficult to get a job, and expenses for children are higher. In such a situation, being part of a Polish team is far less attractive. Not only is the lower wage problem, but these workers must also adapt to a special scheduling arrangement in which the team works extended hours for three or more weeks and subsequently gets a whole week off in order to visit home in Poland. This is tremendously attractive to the transient migrants but damaging for the family life of those who try to settle in Denmark, since they have almost no spare time on a daily basis and recurrent full weeks off, of which they have no need.

Therefore, in order to grasp the challenges, opportunities and arrangements made at a micro level, more than the mechanisms in play at the workplaces must be considered; paramount also is an understanding of the broader framework of the workers, first and foremost the family.

The EU's Challenge of Balancing Cost Efficiency Through Border Crossing and Maintenance of "Orderly" Conditions

This brief presentation of patterns at organized work sites that are not in accordance with official creeds—not to mention the unorganized and illegitimate work that takes place alongside—leads to a more general question: How is the EU able to navigate the general neo-liberal agenda and the urge to create more cross-border competition (reducing production costs to make the European Union more competitive) and the need to ensure reasonable working conditions (and thus upholding an image of "social Europe" which might be key to maintain cohesion and legitimacy)? Moreover, how can this be done across systemically different systems, such as

the one in Nordic countries where conditions are based on negotiations between different players in the labor market and countries where conditions are based on regulations by law, as well as across countries with significant quantitative differences in livelihood costs?

One can only hope for that such consideration will play a significant role when future EU policies are laid, despite of the fact that sentiments within the labor population no longer hold the kind of strategic importance it did during part of the twentieth century. Compared with the Cold War period, there is not much to fear from a mobilizing European labor population; but this does not make the situation less important for the laborers involved, and probably also for the prospect of maintaining societal cohesion.

Based on the above cases, a tentative solution should be presented relating to the traditionally well-ordered and well-organized Danish labor market system (which generally resembles also the circumstances in the other Nordic countries). It seems the flexibility expressed by the local agreement presented here is probably the only way to ensure maintenance of a labor market mainly controlled by well-ordered industrial relations with responsible unions as well as employers' organizations. A harsh stance from the union part that did not take the fact into consideration at all that workers in the Danish labor market with a home base in low-cost countries are ready to work for less than Danes, and largely dependent on that for finding employment would probably push the new laborers to the margins and informal parts of the labor market. The consequence of that would be that unions overall lost bargaining power. On the other hand, it is obvious that such flexibility is not without deficiencies—eventually leading to an intolerable ethnification of the Danish labor market, and it should continuously be critically examined for adjustments in line with changing conditions such as homeland costs, changed skill profiles of the migrating workers, shifting settlement patterns, etc. In other words, it should be regarded as a

temporary arrangement in order to cope with the challenges. However, this is not a novel feature of the Danish labor market system that over the years, has been known for detailed and mutable regulation down to very local levels when mechanisation, technological development, work organisation, etc., changed the premises for previous achieved agreements regarding borderlines and access to dissimilar parcels of work for different workers' groups (such as "unskilled", "semi-skilled", or "skilled work", "men's work" and "women's work") (Galenson 1952; Jul Nielsen 2002). The current situation differs in the challenge of integrating workers from countries with such a tremendously dissimilar background when it comes to level of wage and living cost. This can make feasible what has been shown in the above cases: to take such differences into account. However, as mentioned, it should remain a temporary, locally laid out, way of coming to terms with the employer. Maybe the Danish tradition of national agreements combined with local negotiations is able to meet these challenges, but it requires an EU level cooperation, including real intentions to protect workers' rights across different labor market systems—also despite the fact that workers no longer represent a unified collective subject feared for its potential to mobilize against the political and economic system.

CONCLUSIONS

It is argued through this paper that in order to fully comprehend contemporary labor markets and life circumstances for ordinary workers, it is beneficial to recognize how a principle transformation has taken place from an overall Keynesian paradigm during the Cold War period to the present neo-liberal era—rather than merely pointing to increased individualism and lack of solidarity as the cause of labor market deterioration.

It is shown how "labor" during the Cold War was pointed out to playing a key role as a precondition for

a successful defense of and maintenance of social cohesion within the Western world. As a consequence, workers' organizations had a substantial influence on state affairs, a set of circumstances that made union support a natural choice of the individual laborer.

Paradoxically, taking into consideration the extensive use of ideological left wing rhetoric—this stabilized the capitalist Western societies, although, as shown, it took place alongside this significant attention toward the life conditions of ordinary workers. Following the collapse of the Eastern Bloc neo-liberalist ideology and governance has succeeded in setting a principle new agenda.

The contemporary state of affairs reduces significantly the political influence of labor organizations and subsequently also the conditions for upholding a feasible life as a worker. Characteristics such as firm and steady job functions, well-defined areas of responsibility, and guarantee of access to distinct areas of work on predictable working conditions are increasingly becoming features of the past.

In the paper, this is exemplified by exploring a specific case—chosen as an expression of the liberalization within the EU based open borders and free movement—on how Polish laborers challenge and adapt to the Danish labor market. It is argued that this labor migration must be understood as dissimilar from the migratory wave that took place in Europe around 1970 due to the altered overall framework. Today, in contrast to before, migration fundamentally shakes and impacts the labor markets and organizational systems.

Finally, it is briefly discussed how the political level can support the development and maintenance of reasonable work life frameworks, also despite the fact that it is not a probable scenario today that workers as a consequence of poor conditions should mobilize as a unified and organized group. Still, however, conditions necessary for living a feasible life as a working man or woman must be provided for. A

clear-cut liberal deregulation will only lead to a race to the bottom and in the long run threaten social cohesion.

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Notes

1. The paper is based on a paper presented at the 7th Nordic Work Life Conference in Gothenburg, June 2014.
2. Translated from Danish: “*at skabe den størst mulige gensidige forståelse og solidaritet mellem NATO-landenes folk... NATO (skal gøres til) et effektivt udtryk for medlemslandenes fællesskab ikke blot på det militære, men i lige så høj grad på de civile områder, der berører politiske, økonomiske og sociale problemer indenfor landene. ... et militært forsvar i sig selv er ikke nok til i det lange løb at forsvare den livsform, der er det vestlige demokratis*”. Documents from the conference are at the Danish labour archive. The following quotes—which are in US English in the original—also stem from these files, unless otherwise stated.
3. Translation from: “*Vi bekæmper den russiske kommunisme på tre fronter: den militære, den økonomiske og den ideologiske. Arbejderklassen er nøglen til de to sidste. Taber vi dem, kan vi ikke vinde på den militære front*”. Original source: Washington National Records Center (WNRC), Record Group (RG) 469, Office of the Director (OD), Subject Files (SF) of the Director 1948-1955; box 24, folder (f.): “Labor 1953”, Mutual Security Agency (MSA), Office of Labor Advisers (OLA), February 6, 1953: “The Labor program of MSA”.
4. The close interdependency between life-modes (or “class”) and a state formation, which recognizes some life-modes at the expense of others, has for a number of years been explored within the framework of life-mode and state form theory (retrieved from www.lifemodes.ku.dk). By pointing to the state as a prerequisite for different life-modes, the attention is drawn also to the survivability of the state itself (whatever changing forms it takes in different periods) within the international state system. This is the reason for the focus on defence and security matters also when it comes to understanding conditions for everyday life of ordinary people. A perspective, which arguably can point to and explain a principle difference between workers' condition during the Cold War period and the current

neo-liberal world order.

5. This parallels an interest in how the struggle at the international political level before and during the Cold War was played out on the workshop floor, which is scrutinized in the aforementioned book (Jul Nielsen 2004). How did the political and ideological situation impact the workers' internal relations (conflictive as well as collaborative); relations between workers and management; and, at the broader social level, the general assumption of what was meant by workers' culture?
6. The main part of this research has been done in collaboration with associate professor Marie Sandberg. It is now continued in the collaborative research project Neoculturation of life-modes during the current transformation of state-system and world economy—the challenges, variations, and changes in cultural life-modes. Retrieved from www.lifemodes.ku.dk/research/.
7. Results from the research have been published in Jul Nielsen and Sandberg (2014) and Jul Nielsen (2013), and more will be published in a forthcoming issue of *Work Organisation, Labour and Globalisation*.

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